

## ART VERSUS NATURE.

A sculptor once carved a very beautiful statue of a woman. It was, he said, to be the crowning work of his life, and he spent many months lovingly carving its delicate lines. At last it drew near completion, a few more life touches and the splendid work would be finished. The fame of this wonderful piece of sculpture was spread abroad, and his friends flocked in to see it. Instructions of praise and admiration were heard on all sides, and the people waited impatiently for the day when they would be bidden to see this great work in its full maturity, the great realization of the sculptor's most ardent thought and hope.

Once more the studio was crowded, and, with eager eyes, all turned to see the great artist slowly unveiling the ravishing marble figure. For a few minutes there was silence, utter painful silence, then a low groan of horror and disappointment ran through the room, while the sculptor stood smiling and satisfied with his work. What had happened? was the man mad? Alas! yes, he must have been, for he had entrusted the final and most delicate touches to a rough stone, who, with untrained and unskilful hands, had effaced the previous delicate workmanship; where soft graceful curves should have been, rude lines predominated; his coarse tools had utterly destroyed the lovely life expression, and only the outline remained to show its previous beauty. The result was terrible.

And yet we little think that the task set which we attribute as modern is done by thousands every day. But it is not practised on clay models or solid marble, would that it were! It is human lives that are thus hacked and hewn, shorn of all their beautiful promise by ignorant and unimproved workmen. Women are the sculptors. The lively carving is a work of Nature set art. Surely the perfect little forms of sweet child life they bring into the world, are worthy of more careful handling and shaping than ignorant undisciplined men can bestow on them. A sensitive child under their care will often have its delicate qualities bruised, its sweet disposition crushed and hardened, and the child's natural character thoroughly spoiled. Little faculties that ought to be brought out and developed, are restrained with rough, impatient words, and the eager questings after knowledge are

If you drive the sculptor mad, why women are ten times more so, and could we have the marble proof, — the comparison — we should with amazement see our sad error, but no gradual is the work of destruction carried on, that it is only when the ruin is complete we come to the full knowledge of the great wrong. And regret, alas! too late, that we had not entrusted the finishing touches of our grand and beautiful work to more skilful and competent hands.

MAY COLTHERIDGE.

Wallington, Surrey.

## WHAT WE MAY BECOME.

(Here the writer bowed, hoping that this paper will be taken for what it is, thoughts strong together and not an attempt to enlighten her others and herself.)

Six short months ago we dreamed that to lead our children to obedience we must ourselves be worthy of being obeyed, not acting as a task against which a child would shrink from doing as well, but being a character, a *person*, whose *transparency*, if we may so describe it, shall draw forth and answer, as days go by, an altogether willing submissiveness.

What right have we, what ground, for daring to hope that we can ever be such a character, that we can ever be in others what some persons have been to us — an *exaltation*?

The ground of our hope is in the nature that is ours. And here we use the word "nature" not as meaning temperament, disposition or intellectual capacity, but as inclusive of the deep foundation *wherein* all these are rooted.

And what is that nature which forms our deepest depth? surely a pure, steady groundwork at its best, ruled with weak spots, dominated by involuntary sin, by conscious wrong doing, and wrong thinking. But (and that is not so *exactly* for us, when we are, and shall be ever be, bound in the heart of God. How, then, our hope, will here it be the possibility of all God-forsaken, to be ruled in the first, as well as in the greatest, moments of our lives.

Now is this merely a theory, not a happy thought, but a solid, *unmistakable* fact, or *absolutely* true and real as that in the *across* *time* is *so* *power*, the all but certainty of the oak "all but"

merely because weakness and pain, shall find themselves in our actual growth.

Have we not, over and over again, felt within us the pang, of birth into a higher life, felt the burning, burning conviction that we might be more than we are, have we not turned to ourselves that external circumstances shall not hold us down, shall not effect our temper of mind, shall not be allowed to rule and govern its best capacities. Is there one of us who has not felt that the great God somewhere some great force, some elevating thing that should lift his full of soul, full of love, and a power of endurance. We look and watch and pray, as we think, but where do we look, for what do we watch, and how do we pray?

All our life is a prayer, more fervent and effectual than any we ever uttered, and our outward lives are its most and inevitable answer.

We live, if we look deep enough, upon ourselves, and all life is then a failure. We watch diligently, but it is in this we are discover extreme strength, extreme wisdom, and we never look within never realize that, being God's children, we are, and we are, born from His heart, and our life with His nature as our own possession, with the possibility, with the certainty if we will have it so, of becoming perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. How this must destroy, absolutely, not sufficiently practical? Why would it seem impossible that a child should grow like its father? Why should we think of ourselves as for ever doomed to be, to follow Him, in the pattern of whose nature we are made, who breathes into us daily and hourly the breath of His life.

Is it not enough for us to grasp this? that we may have our children as He loves them, teach them as He would teach them, be to them just such a friend and guide as He would want, like them to have with them. But will the realization that such is our nature be sufficient to insure our being able to live accordingly? We answer that it is only as we give out that which we already have that God can give us any more, only as we lose the mystical self absorbed, existence which we all now even life, that we find life as God thinks of it — only as we push ourselves, absolutely let ourselves go, that God can lead us to any higher existence.

Let the idea that this may tell him the deepest, the most capable heart of our own self, and his hands altogether different, and in themselves a working with a certainty of success, a daily strengthening of that union with God which is the highest state, the only Heaven, which we can ever know.

H. H. F.

## "TOLD TO MYSELF YEARS AGO."

Here you are in the night, when you were half waking and half sleeping, imagined the huge ball shaped earth was crushing you? You are but an atom compared with its immensity, still the smallest atom bears a far larger proportion to the orange upon which it happens to alight. You cry aloud for help, feeling crushed and lost, and you make to find yourself in bed with the moonlight streaming through the uncertain window. "That is only nightmare!" you say. True, but precisely such is the state of mind in which we find ourselves if we look not upon the world from the point of view permitted by its immediate circumstances.

The great problems of the world overwhelm us, and we fall before it with a sense of powerlessness. Sometimes the ordinary routine of our lives shuts out this questioning and we tell our souls with the fulfiling of daily duties, but the smallest circumstance will put it to our mind — and having gained admission it is not to be lightly put aside. From this sense of our own feebleness arises fellow feeling or sympathy. This morning we sit on a bench — that without a thought of anything beyond it. We spoke of what had happened the day before and of what we should do to-day. If we had been surrounded we should have been conscious of the fact — and indeed we are — that we are, but for the time it was forgotten. A casual observer might have said, "Here is a light haired English girl, taking breakfast, and making innocent plans for the day's work. She does not brood over past, present, or future, but takes life as it comes." "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" — something bad happens and she is sorry, something pleasant occurs and she is glad. Thus may the commoner live his life all the while."

Suddenly there passes the window a girl laden with her pots, which she is trying to sell. She is very thin, and the sun would pinches her features until they look sharper than usual. Instantly the question arises within the mind of the spectator, "Why should I not live as my — while that girl, who is perhaps more downy —, carries that heavy burden through the mud? How should I should think of it if I had to do that? How all my friends would